3235 Coaching Ladder

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3235-coaching-ladder/

The Training Ladder builds the cast. The Coaching Ladder develops the leaders who run it.

They are not the same instrument. The Training Ladder is the progression from cast member to trainer to lead — the verb changes at each rung, and the rung is earned by mastering the one below it. The Coaching Ladder is what the operator runs on the leadership layer after the Training Ladder has done its job. It is the ongoing development discipline that keeps the lead growing past the point of initial competence into genuine leadership capability.

A lead who was properly developed through the Training Ladder can run their domain. The Coaching Ladder is what determines whether they grow beyond running it — whether they develop the cast below them, build the bench the operation needs, and eventually become the person who can hold Rung 3 or Rung 4 without the operator in the room.

The coaching relationship runs differently from the training relationship. Training is transmission — here is the standard, here is how it is executed, here is what mastery looks like. Coaching is development — here is what I see in you, here is what the next rung requires, here is the gap between where you are and where you are going. Training closes the gap between the person and the standard. Coaching closes the gap between the person and their potential.

Three things the Coaching Ladder requires:

A cadence. Not ad hoc. Not when the operator has time. Scheduled, recurring, protected. The lead who only gets coaching when something goes wrong gets conditioned to hide problems. The lead who gets coaching on a reliable schedule learns to surface them.

A direction. Coaching that only looks backward — what happened, what went wrong, what needs to change — is remedial. Coaching that looks forward — where you are going, what the next rung requires, what you need to develop to get there — is developmental. Both are needed. The ratio matters. The operator who spends the coaching conversation entirely on correction is not coaching — they are managing. Managing maintains. Coaching grows.

A standard. The coaching is anchored to a documented picture of what the next rung looks like — the verb that needs to be built, the capabilities that need to develop, the milestones that mark

progress. Without it, coaching is impressionistic. The lead does not know what they are being developed toward. The operator does not know whether the development is working.

The Coaching Ladder is what separates the operation that produces leads from the operation that burns through them. The lead who is never developed past initial competence plateaus, gets bored, and leaves — or stays and stops growing, which is the same problem with a different timeline. The lead who is actively developed toward the next rung stays because they can see where they are going and feel the movement toward it.

Pairs with: [Training Ladder], [Mastery Game], [Each Rung Is Its Own Verb], [The Ten-Minute Close], [Rung 2: The Hardest Rung], [People Leave for One Reason]